

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, I was regrettably unable to cast votes on Tuesday, January 28 and Wednesday, January 29, 2004, as I was part of a congressional delegation visiting our troops in Iraq. Had I been present, I would have cast the following votes:

"Yes" on Roll Call No. 6, passage of H.R. 1385, authorizing the U.S. Postal Service to issue stamps supporting breast cancer research;

"Yes" on Roll Call No. 7, passage of H.R. 3493, the Medical Devices Technical Corrections Act;

"Yes" on Roll Call No. 8, the Baldwin substitute to S. 1920, regarding the extension of chapter 12 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code;

"Yes" on Roll Call No. 9, the motion to recommit S. 1920 with instructions;

"Yes" on Roll Call No. 10, final passage of S. 1920, regarding the extension of chapter 12 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code;

"No" on Roll Call No. 11, motion to instruct conferees on S. 1920, regarding the extension of chapter 12 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code.

H.R. 3108—THE PENSION FUNDING EQUITY ACT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge Congress to quit playing politics with the pensions of American workers. This country faces a pension funding crisis in desperate need of the temporary fix provided in the Pension Funding Equity Act. Both chambers of Congress passed H.R. 3108 overwhelmingly, and both the House and the Senate should work in the same bi-partisan fashion in conference to produce a bill that can quickly be sent to the President.

By no means should we simply ignore the partisanship and lack of good will that has permeated Congress in recent years and thwarted legislative progress. But we also shouldn't address that larger issue by holding hostage the pensions of hard working Americans.

All of us agree that the new rate for calculating pensions must ensure that they are adequately funded. But the fact of the matter is, we need a temporary fix now, both to protect our pensions and ensure that we don't act hastily in determining the final rate.

Mr. Speaker, our workers are relying on us to pass H.R. 3108 quickly. The temporary funding formula expired at the beginning of this year. And if we don't act now, by April 1, companies will be forced to add inflated amounts to their pension plans, a risky requirement that could force many companies into bankruptcy.

I would also encourage my colleagues on the conference committee to include Senate-passed language that addresses multi-employer plans. These plans are entered into through collective bargaining agreements between unrelated employers. Multi-employer

plans are crucial to employees of small businesses because the collaborative agreements allow small employers to provide defined benefit plans. These plans also provide employees with portable pensions as they move from job to job within the same industry.

The Senate language would provide the temporary relief that multi-employer plans need to address any funding problems and ensure that these important, flexible pension plans remain available to America's workers.

Now is the time to pass this pension legislation. We literally can't afford not to. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. can't afford to take on additional pensions. American corporations can't afford to make inflated payments. And, most importantly, our American workers can't afford to lose their pensions.

Mr. Speaker, let's end the political games and pass this temporary fix to give us the time and flexibility we need to set a permanent replacement for the 30 year Treasury bond rate.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO GREGORIO LAMBERT

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to pay respect to the passing of Gregorio Lambert, who died just four days after his 83rd birthday. Gregorio was a valued member of the Pueblo, Colorado community for close to 20 years. As his family mourns his loss, I think it is appropriate to pay tribute to the contributions Gregorio made to the veteran community of Colorado and his great service to this nation.

Gregorio Lambert grew up in Texas and served in the Army during World War II. Gregorio participated in the Normandy invasion and was held captive as a Prisoner of War in Germany for a year. After receiving an honorary discharge, he returned to Texas and married his wife of 57 years, Flora, later moving to Pueblo in 1985 to raise his family of three sons. Gregorio will be remembered as a valued member of the Pueblo Veterans Ritual Team, which provided assurance that our great veterans receive proper funeral arrangements. He helped put many hearts and minds at ease in the mourning of their loved ones. In addition to this gracious duty, Gregorio was a lifetime member of the San Isabel Chapter of the Disabled American Veterans and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mr. Speaker, Gregorio Lambert was a well-respected member of his community, who unselfishly spent his time honoring his fellow veterans and their families. I am honored to take this time to pay tribute to this great patriot today and I would like to extend my thoughts and deepest sympathies to Gregorio's family and friends during this difficult time of bereavement.

CONGRATULATING THE HONORABLE OTHA LEE BIGGS ON RECEIPT OF THE DR. R.F. HENRY OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise to honor the Honorable Otha Lee Biggs, Judge of Probate for Monroe County, Alabama, on the occasion of his being honored by the Coosa-Alabama River Improvement Association. For the past thirty years, he has served this organization with a high level of commitment and dedication to the success of waterways systems in the State of Alabama, traits that also extend to the service he has provided for the families which he has been elected to serve and represent.

Judge Biggs first joined CARIA in 1970, following his first election to the position of Judge of Probate and chairman of the Monroe County Commission. In the three decades since that time, he has made thirty-three consecutive annual trips to Washington, D.C., to meet with members of Alabama's congressional delegation to advocate for the interests of critical river projects and solicit funding for their completion. His tireless work on behalf of this organization has resulted in his being awarded CARIA's prestigious Dr. R.F. Henry Outstanding Service Award.

His tremendous work ethic and dedication have also been strongly evident in his commitment to economic development in his home county. Following his election in 1970, Judge Biggs immediately set about working to make Monroe County a shining example of growth in South Alabama. Through his efforts and work as both an elected official and unofficial ambassador for the residents of his area, Judge Biggs and the members of the county commission secured commitments from several large-scale corporations and businesses to build, relocate, or expand already existing facilities in Monroe County. Numbered among these are Alabama River Pulp, FDR Plastics, Stayfast, Inc., Vanity Fair Intimates, and B&B Cabinet Doors, LLC. As a result of his work and the work of everyone involved in the county's economic development program, Monroe County at one time led the entire State of Alabama in new job creation.

In addition to Monroe County's economic life, Judge Biggs has also been instrumental in helping that area preserve and promote its strong literary and historic heritage. As the birthplace and home of such internationally known writers as Nelle Harper Lee, Truman Capote, and Mark Childress, Monroe County has been firmly established as the "Literary Capital of Alabama," and Otha Lee Biggs has done tremendous work to ensure this reputation extends beyond county and state lines and reaches an international audience. In recent years, the number of tourists visiting the area has increased exponentially as a result of the significant amount of publicity, both nationally and globally, that the county has received. Additionally, he was instrumental in the creation of annual performances of the stage adaptation of Miss Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and his work on behalf of the county museum and theater troupe has resulted in the production securing permission to perform on stage